

## Study Guide for *The Teaching Gap*<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this guide is to assist study groups in reading *The Teaching Gap* and using it as a tool for implementing standards-based education. This Study Guide provides a variety of ways to facilitate book discussions bringing out the various points of view.

While many educators have experiences with personal or professional book clubs, book clubs offer an opportunity to read and discuss common titles, even though diverse grade levels, years of experience, and job titles are represented.

The Center for the Improvement in Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) maintains a Web site for teacher research <http://www.ciera.org/>. In addition, West Ed provides case studies useful for the teacher as researcher at <http://www.wested.org/cs/wew/view/top/3>.

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<sup>1</sup> Stigler, James W. and James Hiebert. 1999. *The Teaching Gap: Best Ideas from the World's Teachers for Improving Education in the Classroom*. New York: The Free Press.

## Chapter Outlines for *The Teaching Gap*

### ***Chapter 1–The Teaching Gap, p. 1***

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- ❖ The Learning Gap and the Need to Improve
- ❖ Beyond the Learning Gap
- ❖ A Unique Opportunity
- ❖ What We Have Learned from the Video Study

### ***Chapter 2–Methods for Studying Teaching in Germany, Japan, and the United States, p. 15***

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- ❖ Birth of the TIMSS Video Study
- ❖ Goals of the TIMSS Video Study
- ❖ Research Methods: The Nuts and Bolts

### ***Chapter 3–Images of Teaching, p. 25***

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- ❖ Preliminary Descriptions of Teaching
- ❖ Portraits of Eighth-Grade Mathematics Lessons
- ❖ Variations on a Theme
- ❖ Can We Trust the Images?

### ***Chapter 4–Refining the Images, p. 55***

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- ❖ Mathematics in the Classroom
- ❖ Engaging Students in Mathematics

### ***Chapter 5–Teaching as a System, p. 73***

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- ❖ Patterns of Teaching in Three Countries
- ❖ Comparing the Lesson Patterns
- ❖ The Origins of Lesson Patterns

### ***Chapter 6–Teaching is a Cultural Activity, p. 85***

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- ❖ Implications of Teaching as a Cultural Activity
- ❖ Cultural Beliefs About Teaching and Learning: Japan and the United States
- ❖ Changing Cultural Activities

### ***Chapter 7–Beyond Reform: Japan’s Approach to the Improvement of Classroom Teaching, p. 103***

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- ❖ Reform in the United States: Evidence from the Classroom
- ❖ Lesson Study: Japan’s Alternative to Reform
- ❖ Reflections on Lesson Study

### ***Chapter 8–Setting the Stage for Continuous Improvement, p. 129***

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- ❖ Six Principles for Gradual, Measurable Improvement
- ❖ Initiatives for Change: Setting the Stage
- ❖ Summary

### ***Chapter 9–The Steady Work of Improving Teaching, p. 149***

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- ❖ Can Lesson Study Work in the United States?
- ❖ Establishing the Lesson-Study Process
- ❖ Building an Infrastructure for Sharing Professional Knowledge
- ❖ Conclusion

### ***Chapter 10–The True Profession of Teaching, p. 169***

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- ❖ A Popular Solution: Professionalize Teachers
- ❖ Redefining the Problem
- ❖ How Did We Get to This Point?
- ❖ A Lasting Solution: Professionalize Teaching
- ❖ A Vision of the Future

# The Art of Teacher Inquiry

## Chapters 1-4, Key Points and Connections

**Instructions:** This Study Guide can be used as a small group activity at the end of a staff development workshop on *The Teaching Gap* (45-60 minutes). Schedule about ten minutes for participants to read, write, and share their responses.

**Tip:** Use this activity at a staff meeting.

Collect and reprint responses in your daily bulletin to keep the topic alive at your school. Post responses on chart paper in the staff room.

Your job is to prepare a brief summary of one of the first four chapters of *The Teaching Gap*. A group discussion will start with your 1-2 minute statement that covers the key points, main highlights, and general idea of today's reading assignment.

Chapter Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Key Points:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Connections: How does this chapter reflect your own professional experience?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 5, Activity for Teaching as a System

For this activity, participants should have read Chapters 1-5.

List the patterns that the author observed from each country studied—consider all countries.

	The German Pattern	The Japanese Pattern	The U.S. Pattern
Reviewing			
Presenting			
Procedures for problem solving			
Practicing			

What implications does the study of these various mathematical patterns have for mathematics instruction in your school district?

## Instructions for Think–Write–Pair–Share

### Chapter 8, Activity for Gradual, Measurable Improvement

Participants should have read Chapter 8 for this activity.

The presenter announces that one of the purposes of this workshop is to provide strategies to be used by the participants at their school site. This strategy is called Think–Write–Pair–Share. Make sure that everyone has at least one response card. (Allow 35-45 minutes.)

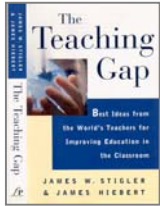
Possible prompts for this activity:

- ❖ What are the implications for standards-based education?
- ❖ How can gradual, measurable improvement methods help you reach standards?

<b><i>Step 1: Think and Write</i></b> Participants read the prompt from Chapter 8 and quick-write an example of one of the principles from Gradual, Measurable Improvement. (2-3 minutes.)	<b><i>Step 3: Share</i></b> Find another set of partners and share all four responses. (8-10 minutes.) (Call on a couple of people to share their thoughts.)
<b><i>Step 2: Pair</i></b> Share your quick-write with a nearby partner. Make sure to use good listening skills. (2-3 minutes.)	<b><i>Step 4: Feedback</i></b> Prepare a summary of your most important responses or make a list of all of your responses on one of your partners' response card. (3-5 minutes.)
<b><i>Step 5: Group Report</i></b> Select one person from your whole group who can report on your group's findings. (3-10 minutes.)	
<b><i>Step 6: Application</i></b> Each participant plans a strategy to use in his or her own classroom and shares the results at the next meeting. Participants may supply examples of student work, when appropriate, for the group's discussion.	

Journal writing is a powerful design for learning. Unlike *thinking about* ideas, which eventually can be forgotten, journals are permanent records of those thoughts or ideas. When a learner is required to apply language to an idea, the idea takes shape and form.\*

\*Killion, Joellen, National Staff Development Council, Journaling, Summer 1999, p. 36.



## Final Reflections and Implications for School Change

**Connections: Use one of the following prompts to write a journal entry:**

Participants should have read *The Teaching Gap* and one of the grade span documents, (*Elementary Makes the Grade!*, *Taking Center Stage*, or *Aiming High*) to complete this activity. Each participant may consider writing his or her perspective in a journal.

1. What connections do you find with the three initiatives of *The Teaching Gap* and recommendations of *Elementary Makes the Grade!*, *Taking Center Stage*, or *Aiming High*?
2. How can you use the information in this book to improve your teaching?

<i>The Teaching Gap</i>	<i>Elementary Makes the Grade!</i> , <i>Taking Center Stage</i> , or <i>Aiming High</i>
<p><b>Initiative #1</b> Build Consensus for Continuous Improvement.</p> <p><b>Initiative #2</b> Set Clear Learning Goals for Students and Align Assessment with These Goals.</p> <p><b>Initiative #3</b> Restructure Schools as Places Where Teachers Can Learn.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation</b></p>

### Sharing Activity for Last Session

As a professional development practice, journal writing becomes a place for learners to record observations, toy with various perspectives, analyze their own practice, keep records, make comments, or reconstruct experiences. Journals can be kept private or shared with colleagues for response, feedback, interpretation, or comment.

**Tip:** Select one journal entry and share that journal entry with the total group. Facilitators may lead the discussion about the different statements and interpretations.